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Comment on Proceeding #05-235

Gentlemen:

I was first licensed in 1956 as KN2RQC, then K2RQC. I proceeded from Novice to General to Extra Class at a time when the Extra brought no extra privileges; I was sixteen years old..

I do not consider that accomplishment to have been particularly difficult. My Morse competence had increased naturally through on-the-air *practice*. My mastery of the written elements also proceeded naturally through deeper involvement in the hobby, as I *learned* both through book study and construction projects.

Is this not what was intended by the licensing structure?

To me, this issue is not about the relevance of Morse code to modern communications. Rather, it is about the *art* of radio, and of working to improve one's skills to become a more capable and knowledgeable operator. I have always cherished my amateur radio license precisely *because* it required effort to upgrade. If all it takes is memorizing a set list of questions and two cereal box tops, what does it mean to be a radio amateur?

The no-code Tech license should have shown us how little meaning something has if it is obtained with little or no effort. My zip code is home to over 300 licensed amateurs; most are no-coders and most are never on the air. FCC has its numbers—but how many of these folks ever advance in the hobby?

I would rather see the United States have 300,000 competent, enthusiastic and involved hams than 2 million licensees who do nothing with their tickets.

You gentlemen have already dumbed down amateur radio to an appalling degree. You abandoned 20 wpm for Extras and 13 wpm for Generals; now you want to eliminate the last vestige of the radio operator's basic art. What's next—an Extra for 20,000 frequent flyer miles?

Garry Shapiro, NI6T